



St. James Town West Park Redesign

Community Consultation Summary
Phase 2: Concept Design Options
June 2021

Prepared by



For



Executive Summary

The City of Toronto is proceeding with plans for the redesign of St. James Town West Park. The park, located between Sherbourne Street, Bleecker Street, and Howard Street is currently leased to the City of Toronto from Medallion Developments Inc. who have parking garages located beneath much of the park. As a result of a new high-rise development at the corner of Sherbourne Street and Howard Streets, and the need to undertake significant maintenance to the parking garage roof, the City has the opportunity to redesign the park to better meet the needs of the community.

Building on the feedback received through a community visioning survey conducted in March 2021, the City and its consultants presented two Concept Design Options to the public to gather feedback that will be used to refine the design for further consultation. These designs were developed to provide members of the public with a conceptual idea of what the park redesign could be, as such they are not final and will be subject to further public consultation. Ultimately, the final design will incorporate elements taken from both Concept Design Options that resonated with the community's vision for the park.

In response to COVID-19 public health guidelines, Parks, Forestry and Recreation held a series of public engagement events online including a community meeting, an Indigenous Sharing Circle, a design workshop, a youth workshop, classroom workshops with local schools and an online survey. Additionally, the City partnered with the St. James Town Community Corner to provide access to print copies of the park designs and feedback forms. The City of Toronto communicated these engagement opportunities through flyer mailouts, posters, social media, and email updates to the project subscription list. These communication efforts were supported within the community by five community ambassadors who speak Arabic, Amharic, Tamil, Tagalog, and Hindi/Urdu.

We heard the following key messages from the community about what they supported in the Concept Design Options. Participants supported:

- Creating a **balance of paved and green spaces** that meet community needs for a natural reprieve from the city and opportunities for community gathering.
- **Increasing the amount of trees and other vegetation.**
- Providing a **variety of seating opportunities.**
- **Improving the lighting** throughout the park.
- Design elements and opportunities that **add colour to the park** through park furniture and/or plantings.
- **Incorporating and integrating Indigenous place-keeping seamlessly into the overall design** of the park rather than calling-out specific areas or items that are disconnected from the rest of the park or feel as if they stand alone.

Participants also identified opportunities to improve some elements of the Concept Design Options, such as:

- Reassessing the configuration of the paths, and **prioritizing the most travelled pathways for paving** to help achieve a balance of hard surfaces and green spaces.
- Considering more **conventional play structures** (swings, climbing bars, etc...)

Overall, participants were generally supportive of both designs with slightly more participants leaning towards Option 1 – Green Refuge. Many participants also indicated strong agreement with the way design elements were conveyed in Option 2 – Paths.

Feedback detailed in this summary will help inform refinements to the Concept Design Options to develop a Preferred Concept which combines, where possible, elements from both designs that are supported by the community and can be technically achieved on the site.

The City will consult with the St. James Town community further on the Preferred Concept in summer 2021.

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1 Introduction

St. James Town West Park is a 1-acre public park located between Sherbourne Street, Bleecker Street, and Howard Street. Most of the land is currently leased to the City of Toronto by Medallion Developments Inc. who owns the parking garage that lies beneath it.

Medallion will be redeveloping properties at 591-601 Sherbourne Street and repairing the parking garage roof below the park. Due to this work, most of the park will be removed, creating an opportunity to reimagine the park to better meet the needs of local communities.

In March 2021, the City of Toronto conducted a first round of community consultations to understand the community's vision for the future of this park. The feedback from these consultations were document in a summary which is available online.

[Access the St. James Town West Park Redesign Phase 1 Consultation Summary.](#)

Feedback received from the community was used to develop two Concept Design Options (Figure 1 and 2) which provide two ways to imagine how the park might be redesigned. These options were presented to the community on April 20, 2021 and the City of Toronto undertook a series of community engagement events to gather further feedback.



Figure 1. Concept Design Option 1 - Green Refuge



Figure 2. Concept Design Option 2 - Paths

The following summary documents the feedback received on the Concept Design Options through engagement events with the community held in late April and early May 2021 as part of the second round of community consultation on the redesign of St. James Town West Park.

2 What We Heard

This summary is organized by general park elements that participants identified as important in the Concept Design Options (Section 2.1.1), and features to refine or improve (Section 2.1.2). Additional feedback differentiating the options is included in Section 2.2. Feedback documented in this section represents groups of similar comments received through the engagement process. **Appendix A** includes a detailed breakdown of the online questionnaire and virtual community meeting responses. Section 2.3 provides more feedback on the park elements found in the Concept Design Options.

This section includes feedback received from the virtual community meeting, virtual design workshop, the online survey, Indigenous Community Sharing meeting (detailed summary in **Appendix B**), and youth engagement (detailed summary in **Appendix C**).

This feedback will be used by the landscape architecture team to refine the concept, working to incorporate elements that were strongly supported from both Concept Design Options, address areas of improvement, and incorporate additional ideas where possible.

2.1 Overall Response to the Concept Design Options

2.1.1 Well-Supported Design Features

Participants provided feedback on what elements were most important in the park Concept Design Options. Over 60% of participants in the online questionnaire indicated that the following were either "very important" or "important" to them/their household:

- Pathways providing direct routes to places participants wish to travel to.
- Presence of trees and plants.
- Places to sit and enjoy the park.
- A balance between paved areas and green spaces that offer access to nature.
- Seating options.
- Lighting that makes park users feel safe in the space.

Additional elements, including cultural and community event space, and opportunities for play and exercise were also well supported.

2.1.2 Design Features to Refine or Improve

In both Concept Design Options, participants consistently referred to the following refinements they would like considered in the Preferred Concept:

- Feedback was divided on the open lawn and plaza. Participants equally identified concerns about the amount of paving present in the Paths design, while others identified concerns in the Green Refuge design regarding the maintenance and the ability of lawn areas to resist the impact of many users on the grass surface.
 - Participants identified that the most relevant paths are ones which originate at the corners of the park and cross through the center.
 - Participants elaborated on their concerns about desire lines (direct routes community members travel frequently to reach destinations) in both designs highlighting conflicts with the lawn and central plaza.
 - Participants were concerned that many of the lawn spaces presented in the designs would be damaged or unusable due to off-leash dogs and pigeons.
- Participants were generally concerned about the removal of the play structures, swings, and sandbox that exist today, and identified a growing need for play opportunities as St. James Town continues to grow.
- Participants were generally concerned with the maintenance of trees and other vegetation to ensure these plants are provided with the necessary care to establish and thrive.
- Individuals were curious about the future of various memorial trees with plaques dedicated to passed individuals.
- Consider in both designs the importance of the pathway at the south end of the park connecting Sherbourne Street to Bleecker Street. Many participants identified they use a similar route today to travel to Shoppers Drug Mart. This pathway should include seating and be wide enough to accommodate large

numbers of people walking with grocery carts and strollers. In both designs, the stage (in Option 1) and the play area (in Option 2, however to a lesser extent) were identified as conflicts along this route between park activities and the movement of people.

- Youth consistently identified concerns about the proposed lighting scheme, specifically how well the catenary lights would illuminate the space in the evening and at night. Several requested examples of this and for future renderings of the site to show the space at night as well as during the daytime.

2.1.3 Feedback from Indigenous Community Members

Indigenous community members provided feedback on the concept design options through an Indigenous Community Sharing Meeting. The key themes from this meeting are summarized as follows.

- Indigenous participants expressed an imperative for the design team to meaningfully include the ideas shared at their first meeting into the park design in collaboration with Rebecca Baird (the project's Indigenous artist).
- In both designs, Indigenous participants identified the importance of representations of water, and recommended renaming the park to acknowledge the story of the Spirit Hawk. Indigenous participants reiterated previously shared design ideas including but not limited to Indigenous plants, 13 moons, traditional medicine planting, use of the Moccasin Identifier, sustainable materials, representing a teaching lodge, and the donation of felled trees to Indigenous agencies.
- Indigenous participants identified that Indigenous design elements and public art should be a priority in the park design and integrated fully into the plan and experience of visiting the park.

A complete summary of the Indigenous Community Sharing Meeting is included in **Appendix B**.

2.2 Comparing the Park Concepts

Overall, participants were generally supportive of both designs with slightly more participants leaning towards Option 1 – Green Refuge overall (Figure 3), however many also indicated strong agreement with the way design elements were conveyed in Option 2 – Paths (Table 1).

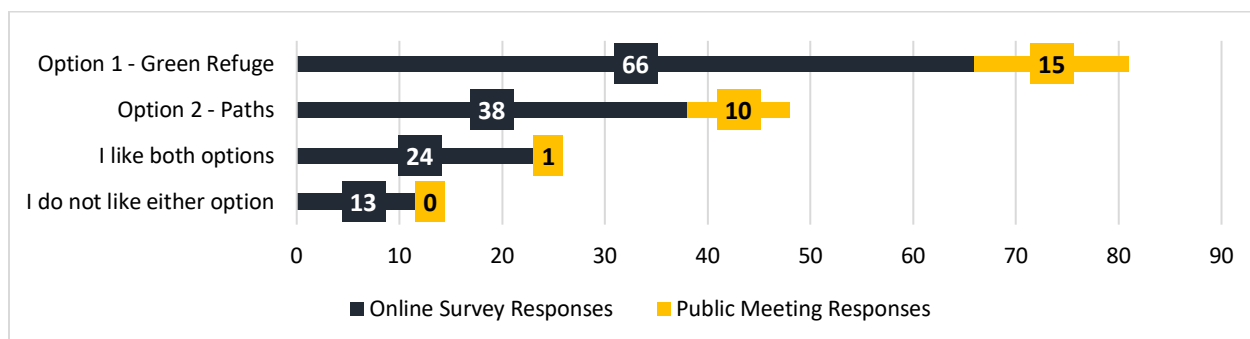


Figure 3. Participants' preference for each Concept Design Option.

Participants identified a variety of park design elements from both options that they liked and would like incorporated in the Preferred Concept Design. Survey participants were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with various statements about design elements included in each option.

Table 1 summarizes the total agreement (all “Strongly Agree” and “Agree”) responses for the park elements as they are represented in Option 1 and Option 2. Notably, despite more participants selecting Option 1 – Green Refuge as their overall preference (Figure 3), participants agreed more strongly with the way almost all the elements are represented in the design of Option 2 – Paths. Full results are included in **Appendix A**.

Table 1. Comparison of participants' agreement with the park design elements as represented in Option 1 and Option 2.

Park Element	Agreement with elements as shown in Option 1	Agreement with elements as shown in Option 2
The pathways would allow me to move easily to the places I want to travel to.	71%	82%
There is a sufficient amount of trees and plants included in this design.	68%	68%
Central open lawn [Option 1]/plaza [Option 2] provides a space to sit and enjoy the park.	66%	72%
I would visit this park to relax and enjoy nature.	63%	62%
There is a balance between paved surfaces and green space.	60%	63%
The amount of open space/lawn meets my/my household's needs.	59%	59%
There are sufficient seating options and places to sit.	59%	73%
The lighting options would make me feel safe.	57%	71%
There are sufficient opportunities to organize cultural or community events.	50%	74%
There are sufficient opportunities for play that meet my/my household's needs.	48%	59%

Participants were also asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with the inclusion of a skate spot. This design element was only illustrated in Concept Design Option 2 – Paths. In total, 55% of participants strongly agreed or agreed that this element would be an important addition to the neighbourhood.

2.2.1 Feedback Specific to Option 1 – Green Refuge

Positive Elements

- The long yellow benches and colours of the playful plaza add a pop of colour to the space making it feel vibrant.
- The amount of greenery in this option is preferred and should be expanded where possible to include more plants.
- Arranging the garage exits near the plazas will have a positive impact on safety for those entering/exiting the garage.
- Youth were supportive of the wood platform and gathering event spaces.

Areas for Improvement and Concerns

- Consider additional opportunities for lighting, including lighting around the edges of the park.
- Concern that the café seating area may become very dark once the trees mature leading to feelings of insecurity.
- Consider the desire line across the open lawn.
- Consider simplifying the paths to provide diagonal paths across the park.
- The pathway flow from the northwest corner to the southwest corner is configured awkwardly to provide a direct path from Sherbourne Street to Bleecker Street.
- Youth identified that this design does not provide enough community space to host community events.

2.2.2 Feedback Specific to Option 2 – Paths

Positive Elements

- The central ring (catenary) light is unique and functional providing lots of light at the centre of the park to maintain safety while also a feature for people to explore. Some individuals were concerned the supporting wires would attract pigeons.
- The central plaza provides opportunities for cultural and community events.
- The proximity of the central plaza and the playful plaza would allow for greater supervision of children.
- The paths in this option more closely reflect the walking routes community members take when they travel through the park currently.
- Youth indicated that the green spaces in this design provide good structure to the design creating outdoor “rooms” for groups of people to gather in.

Areas for Improvement and Concerns

- Many participants were concerned that holding events in the central plaza would block the main route across the park. Some participants were also concerned that a clear path through the park may pose safety risks with cyclists using the paths to cut through the park.
- Responses to the addition of a skate spot in Option 2 (paths) were generally mixed. Some respondents supported the skate spot and identified it as a unique feature that is not available nearby in other parks, while others expressed concerns over potential noise and damage to park features along the paths and plaza. As well, some respondents expressed concern over the park being too small for this use, and that a full size skate park be considered elsewhere where it could be accommodated fully.
 - Youth offered mixed opinions on the skate spot with some identifying it as a valuable amenity that does not currently exist in St. James Town while others identified that it may present conflicts with the nearby play plaza.
- When asked on their preference between a skate spot and basketball court, youth more often identified a basketball court as a preferred alternative amenity.

2.3 Additional Considerations and Ideas

The following new ideas emerged from participant feedback that may be considered through the development of the Preferred Concept:

- Solar powered lighting.
- Vertical gardens.
- Additional seating designs such as Muskoka/Adirondack chairs.
- Opportunities for adult exercise and play in addition to these opportunities provided for children.
- Consider more adding a few more conventional play elements such as swings to the design of the play areas.
- Opportunities for bike parking and repair.
- Games inlaid into the pavement such as giant chess.
- Opportunities to highlight the importance of immigration to St. James Town through public art and place-making.
- Utilize sustainable materials in the park's construction.
- Ensure native plant species are included.

3 How We Engaged

3.1 Communication Methods

3.1.1 Project Webpage

The City of Toronto's St. James Town West Park Redesign webpage (<http://toronto.ca/stjamestown>) acted as a communications portal to inform the public about all information regarding the project including general information, project updates, a link to the online questionnaire, and an option to subscribe for project related e-updates.

3.1.2 Printed Media

Project information was displayed on three (3) notice boards placed at the Sherbourne Street, Howard Street, and Bleecker Street entrances to St. James Town West Park. These notice boards provided information about the project, the date and how to join the virtual community meeting, and information on how to access additional project information on the St. James Town West Park redesign website.

Smaller tabloid (11"x17") posters were placed throughout the St. James Town neighbourhood at bus stops, grocery stores, and public spaces prior to the virtual community meeting to advertise the meeting and the survey.

A postcard advertising the community meeting and online survey was also mailed to addresses located within an area defined by Huntley Street to the west, Wellesley Street East to the south, Parliament Street to the east, and Rosedale Valley Road to the north, encompassing over 11,000 addresses. Copies of the postcard were made available at the front desk of the St. James Town Community Corner.





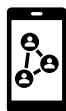
3.1.3 Social Media and Digital Ads

The City of Toronto used its Facebook and Twitter accounts to promote the virtual community meeting and online questionnaire from April 13, 2021 to May 9, 2021. Additional social media outreach was supported by LURA Consulting and DTAH's Twitter accounts.

3.1.4 Community Ambassadors

Five community ambassadors hired by the project team assisted with outreach for the community meeting, design workshop, and online survey. Community ambassadors connected with their community networks through phone calls, emails, texts, and other group messaging platforms to increase awareness about the project. Community ambassadors communicated this information in English, Arabic, Amharic, Tagalog, Tamil, and Hindi/Urdu.

Table 2. Summary of Outreach Methods

Outreach Method	Outreach Activities	Reach
Project Webpage 	<p>A dedicated webpage was developed within the City of Toronto's website to act as an integrated platform for all project related information. Through the webpage, interested people could also subscribe to receive updates and information about the project.</p>	Reached <i>Data unavailable</i>
Mailouts 	<p>A flyer advertising the meeting and survey was delivered to 11,835 addresses in the neighbourhood. The flyer was also available at the front desk of the St. James Town Community Corner (200 Wellesley Street East).</p> <p>The virtual meeting notice was included in the local Councillor's newsletters leading up to April 20, 2021 virtual meeting.</p>	Reached 11,835
Posters 	<p>Three (3) 3-foot by 4 foot posters displaying information about the virtual community meeting were placed at the main entrances to St. James Town West Park.</p> <p>Twelve (12) 11 inch by 17 inch posters displaying information about the virtual community meeting were placed throughout St. James Town near transit stops, grocery stores, plazas, and playgrounds.</p>	Reached 22+ ¹
Community Ambassadors 	<p>Community ambassadors reached out to their community networks in English, Arabic, Amharic, Tagalog, Tamil, and Hindi/Urdu to raise awareness about the community meeting, design workshop, and online survey.</p>	Reached 350
Social Media 	<p>The virtual community meeting and online survey were promoted through the City of Toronto's Facebook and Twitter accounts with additional outreach support from DTAH and LURA.</p>	Reached Over 30,000

¹ This refers to the number of participants who indicated through the survey and the public meeting that they were informed about the meeting and survey through signs placed in the community. The actual number of individuals who may have seen these signs and considered "aware" of the project may be higher.

Outreach Method	Outreach Activities	Reach
Total Reached		Over 40,000

3.2 Engagement Methods

3.2.1 Virtual Community Meeting

A community meeting was held virtually using Zoom on April 20, 2021 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. The event began with a presentation from DTAH (the landscape architecture consultants), which was followed by a Question and Answer period. Participants were invited to pose their questions and comments in the meeting chat box. Questions were read out loud and answered by members of the project team. Participants were separated into four small groups led by members of the project team to gather detailed feedback on the two Concept Design Options.

The presentation slides from the presentation were made available online following the meeting for review. [Access the virtual community meeting presentation.](#) Print copies of the presentation slides were made available at the front desk at the St. James Town Community Corner.

3.2.2 Indigenous Sharing Meeting

An Indigenous Sharing Meeting was held virtually using Zoom on April 22, 2021 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. The purpose of this meeting was to provide a dedicated opportunity to listen to First Nation, Métis and Inuit voices and perspectives, and was the second meeting of this group held as part of the St. James Town West Park Redesign engagement process.

The full summary prepared by Bob Goulais, the Indigenous Facilitator for the St. James Town West Park Redesign project is included in **Appendix B**.

3.2.3 Community Design Workshop

A first community design workshop was held virtually using Zoom on April 26, 2021 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. to provide an opportunity for representatives from local community organizations and individuals who would prefer to participate in Arabic, Amharic, Tagalog, Tamil, and Hindi/Urdu. The event began with a presentation from DTAH (in English). Participants were then separated into groups based on their preferred language of participation. In these small groups, a community ambassador with fluency in one of the five languages provided a brief explanation of the designs then facilitated a discussion about the designs and recorded participants' feedback. At the end of the meeting, each facilitator shared back what they heard in their group to the project team in English.

3.2.4 Youth Engagement

A Youth Resource Group meeting was held virtually using Zoom on May 3, 2021 from: 4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. The purpose of this meeting was to provide a dedicated

opportunity for youth to provide their input into the Concept Design Options building on previous conversations about the vision for the park.

City staff also delivered workshops on ideas related to the park's design at a high school Civics class at Jarvis Collegiate Institute, and to two Grade 6 classes at Rose Avenue Junior Public School. These workshop sessions were intended to provide an opportunity for young people to share their feedback on the Concept Design Options.

Full summaries from the Youth Resource Group and school workshops were prepared by City staff and are available in **Appendix C**.

3.2.5 Online Survey

An online survey was made available on the City's project webpage from April 20, 2021 to May 9, 2021. The online survey presented a series of questions asking participants for their feedback on the Concept Design Options presented in the virtual meeting. The online questionnaire was accompanied by a copy of the presentation slides.






The survey was available online in English, Arabic, and Simplified Chinese. Paper copies of the survey and the presentation slides were available and advertised for pick-up at the St. James Town Community Corner at 200 Wellesley Street East. Additionally, Community Ambassadors provided assistance to individuals in completing the survey.

Questionnaire Demographics

Online survey respondents were asked to voluntarily provide demographic information about themselves to better understand who is participating and what groups in the community were missed as part of this engagement process. A full summary of the demographic information is included in Appendix A. Respondents to the survey self-identified as part of a diverse mix of backgrounds and were predominantly renters.

Compared to the North St. James Town neighbourhood profile, where the park is located, there were fewer renter households represented in the questionnaire compared to the neighbourhood population (90.9% renter households). The visible minority population of the neighbourhood was underrepresented in this questionnaire with only 50% of respondents self-identifying as South Asian, Indo-Caribbean, Middle Eastern, Southeast Asian, Black, or Latino compared to the most recent census data where 67% of the neighbourhood population self-identified as a visible minority. The age distribution of questionnaire participants is close to the neighbourhood profile. Community ambassadors assisted several community with completing the questionnaire in Arabic, Tagalog, and Hindi.

Table 3. Summary of Engagement Methods

Engagement Method	Engagement Activities	Engagement Reach
Virtual Community Meeting 	A virtual community meeting was held on April 20, 2021 to present the Concept Design Options for the redesign of St. James Town West Park, answer questions, and gather feedback from community members on the designs.	Engaged 54
Indigenous Sharing Meeting 	A virtual Indigenous Sharing meeting was held on April 22, 2021 to present and gather feedback on the Concept Design Options. This meeting was led by Bob Goulais, the Indigenous Facilitator for the St. James Town West Park Redesign project.	Engaged 11
Community Design Workshop 	A virtual community design workshop was held on April 26, 2021 to present and gather feedback on the Concept Design Options to community organizations and individuals whose preferred language to participate in this conversation is not English. Local community ambassadors assisted participants through discussions held in Arabic, Amharic, Tamil, Tagalog, and Hindi/Urdu.	Engaged 19
Youth Engagement 	<p>The second Youth Resource Group meeting was held on May 3, 2021 to present and gather feedback on the Concept Design Options for the redesign of St. James Town West Park, answer questions, and gather feedback from local youth on the designs.</p> <p>City staff delivered workshops to 20 students in a Civics class at Jarvis Collegiate Institute and to 35 students at Rose Avenue Public School.</p>	Engaged 9 55
Online Survey & Email 	An online survey was developed to gather detailed feedback on participant's impressions of the Concept Design Options presented at the virtual public meeting. The online survey was available in English, Arabic, and Simplified Chinese from April 20, 2021 to May 9, 2021.	Engaged 220
Total Engaged		368

4 Next Steps

The feedback received through Round 2 will be used to inform the development of a Preferred Concept Design. The Preferred Concept will consider the feedback on the two Concept Design Options to create one plan which combines, where possible, elements from both designs that are supported by the community and can be technically achieved on the site given site constraints such as the underground parking garage.

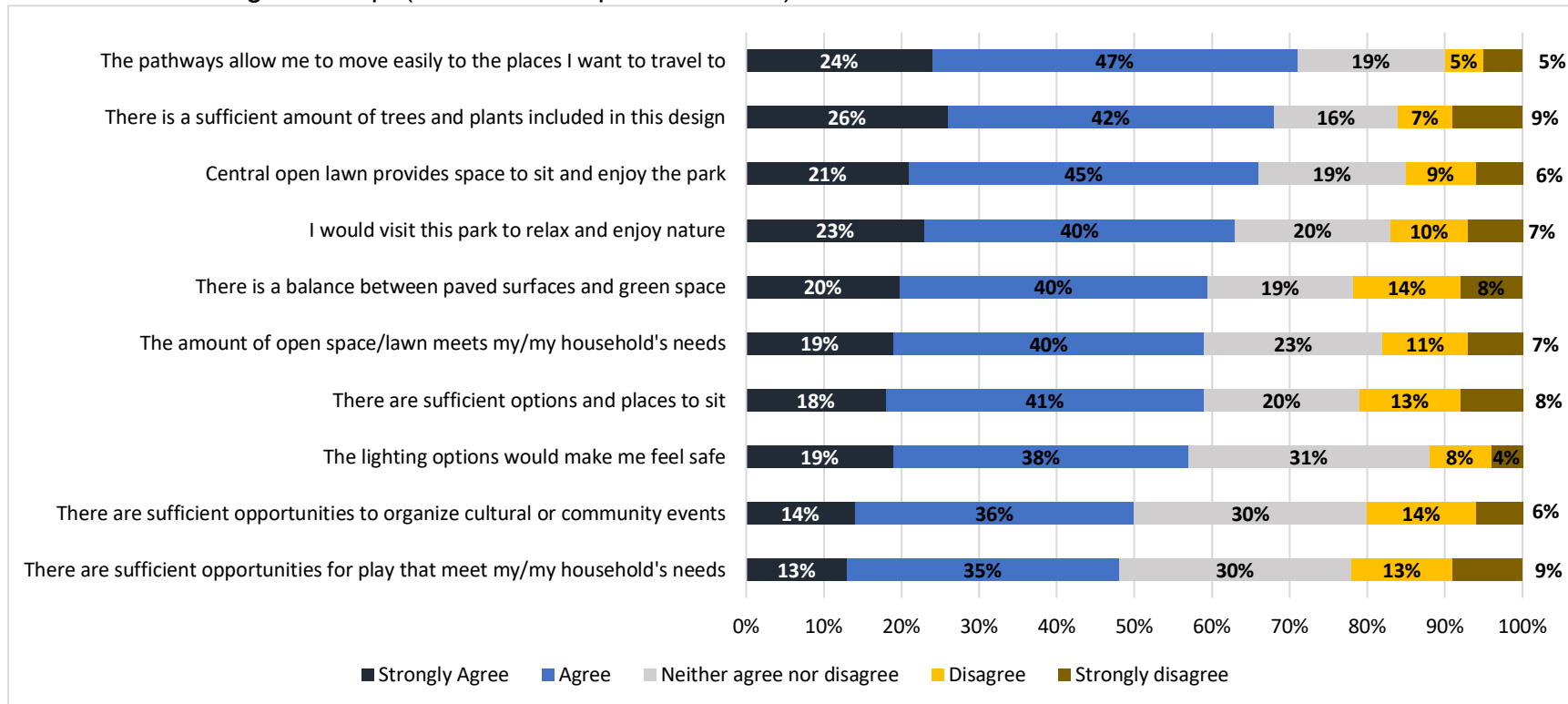
The City of Toronto will return to the community to consult on the design of the Preferred Concept Design in summer 2021.

To be notified about upcoming consultations for the redesign of St. James Town West Park, please sign up for email updates at toronto.ca/stjamestown

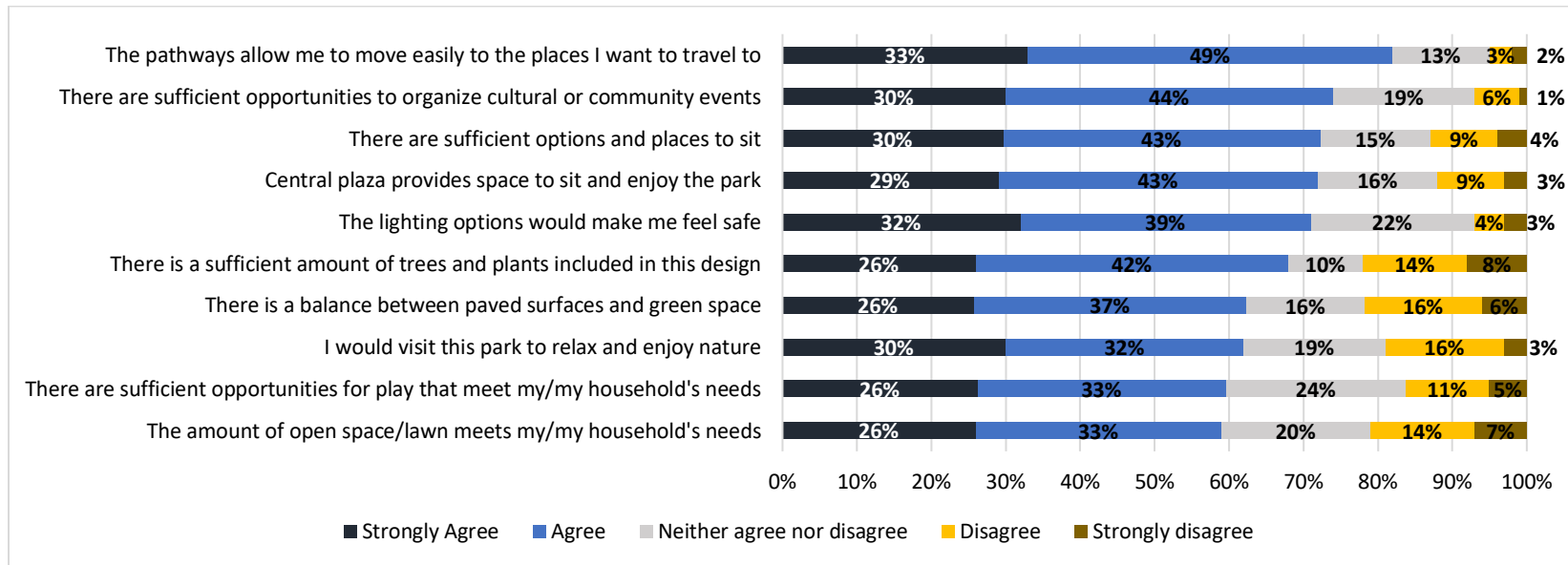
Appendix A

Survey and Community Meeting Quantitative Responses

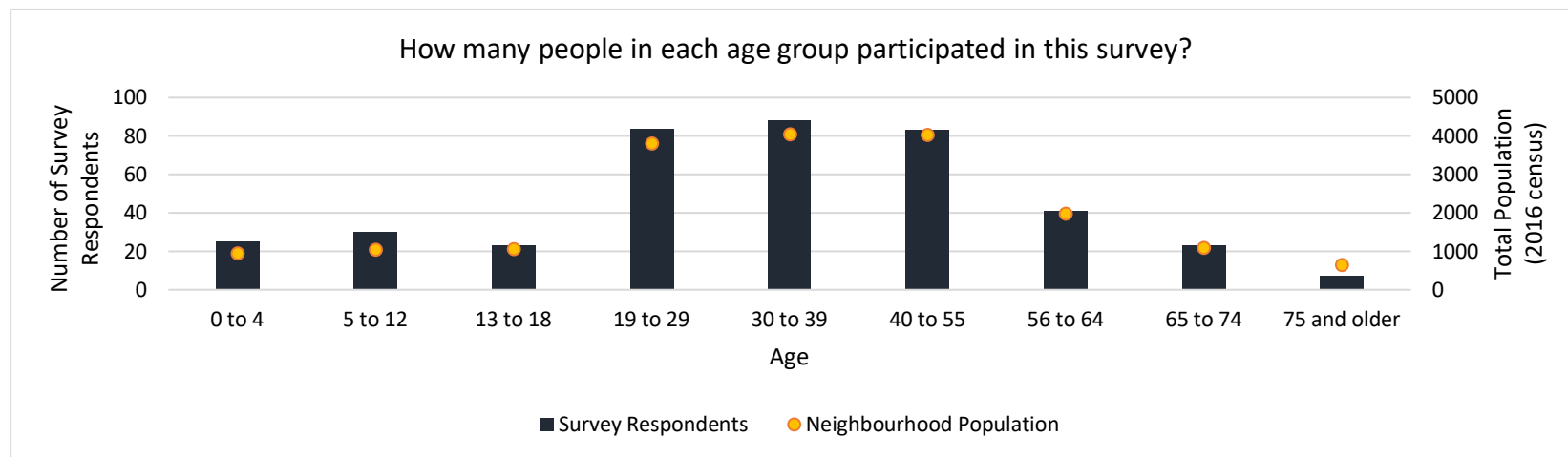
1. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about the elements in Option 1: Green Refuge Concept (Number of respondents: 220).



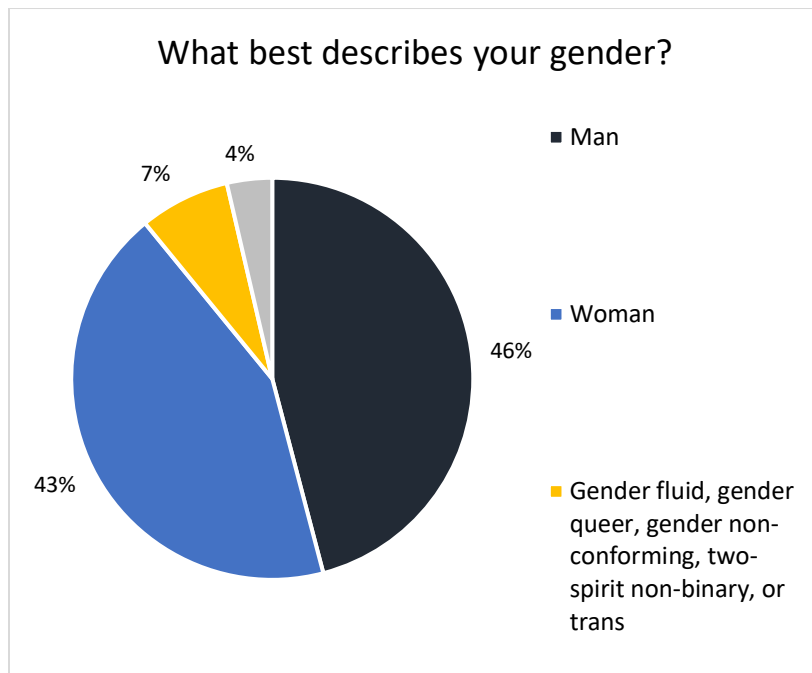
2. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about the elements in Option 2: Paths Concept (Number of respondents: 220).



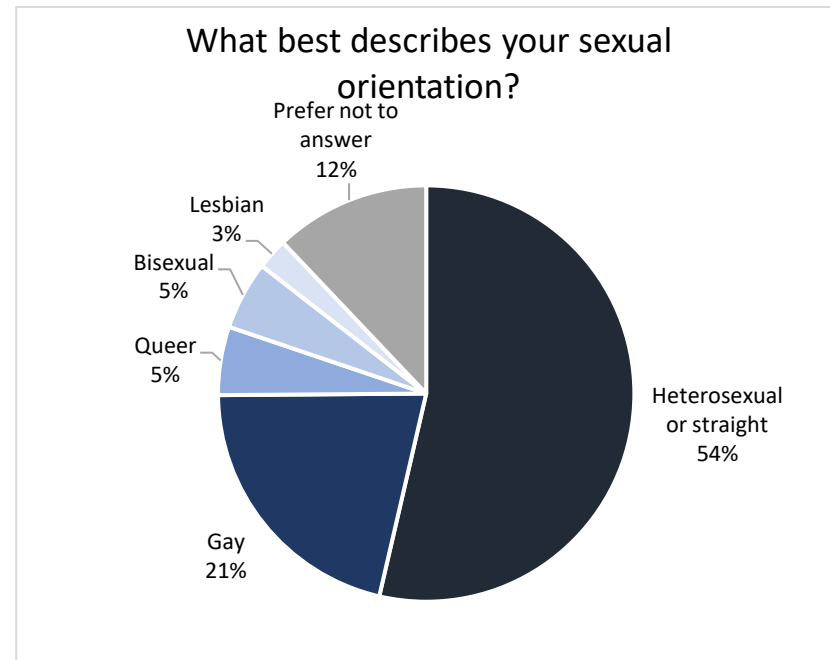
3. How many people of each age group participated in this survey? (Number of respondents: 220).



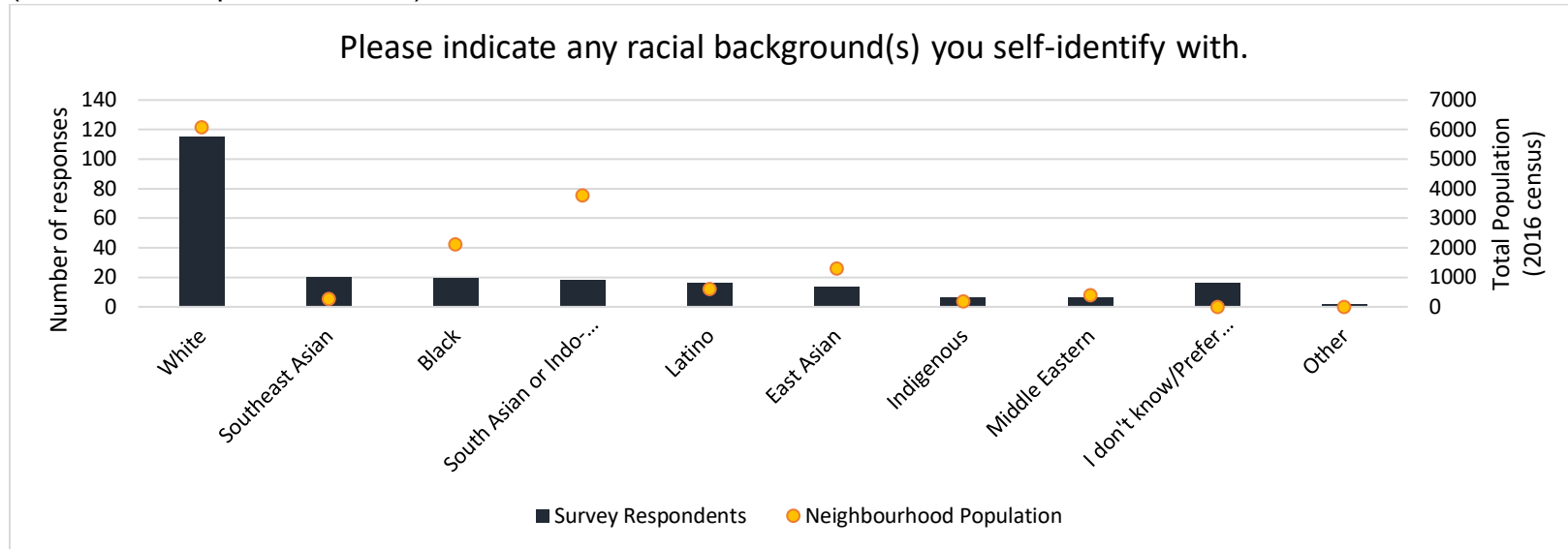
4. Gender identity is the gender that people identify with or how they perceive themselves, which may be different from their birth-assigned sex. Gender identity is linked to a sense of self, the sense of being a woman, man, both, neither or anywhere along the gender spectrum (non-binary). What best describes your gender? (Number of respondents: 220).



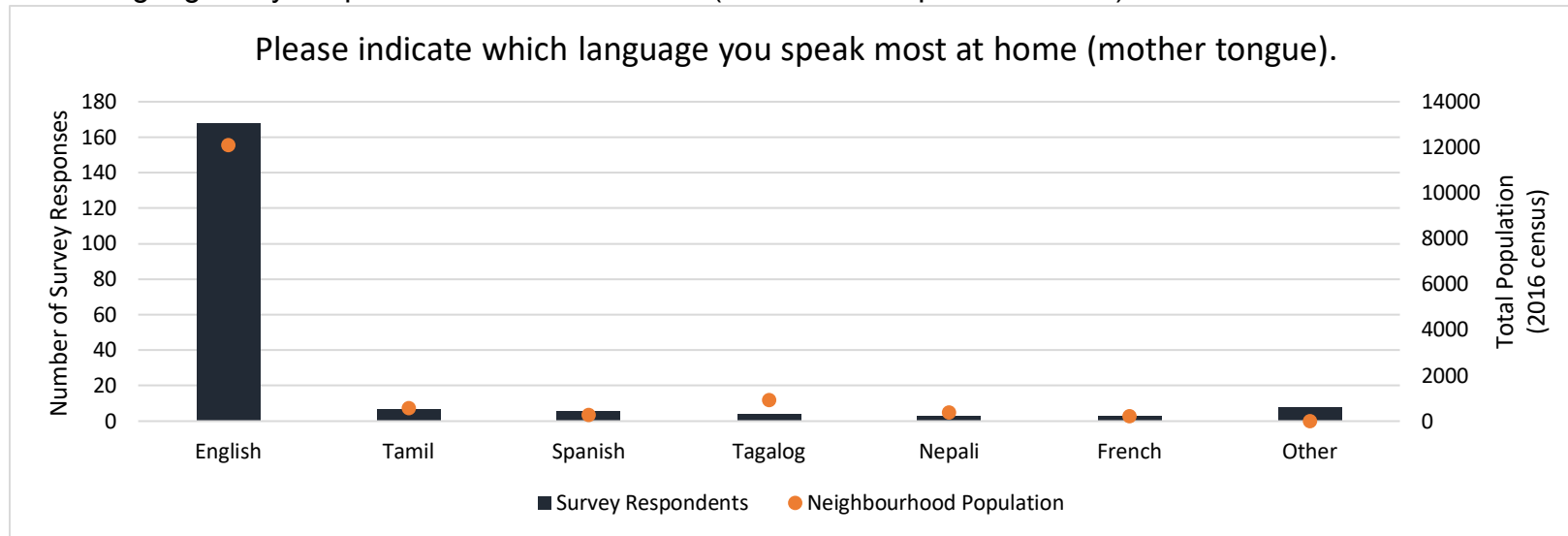
5. Sexual orientation describes a person's emotional, physical, romantic, sexual and/or spiritual attraction, desire or affection towards other people. What best describes your sexual orientation? (Number of respondents: 220).



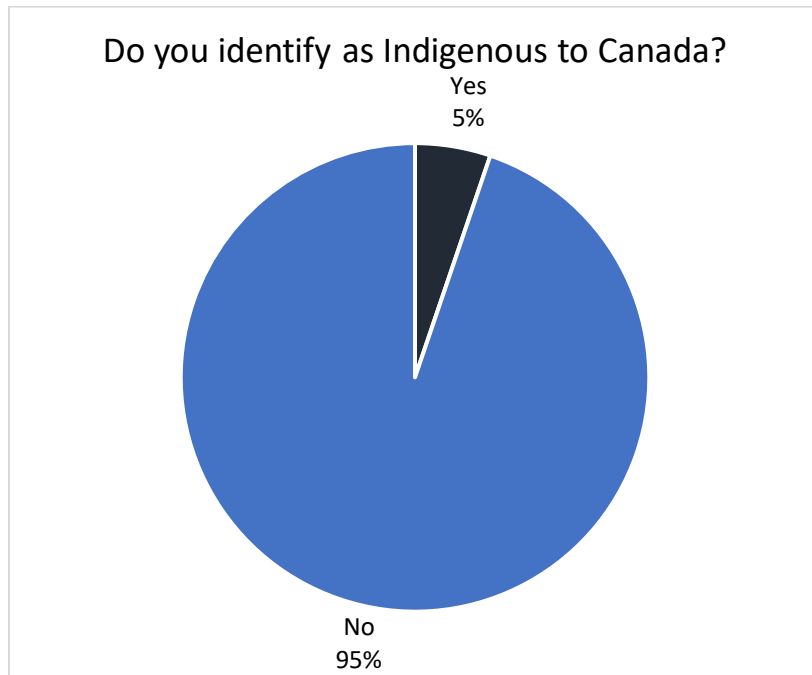
6. Please select the racial backgrounds that people who completed this survey identify with. Select all that apply.
(Number of respondents: 220).



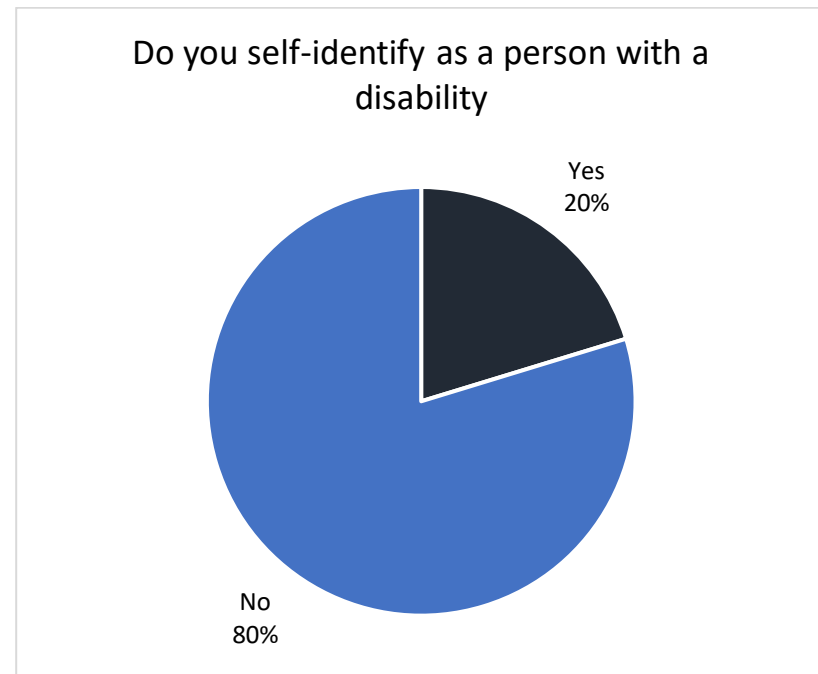
7. What language do you speak most often at home? (Number of respondents: 220).



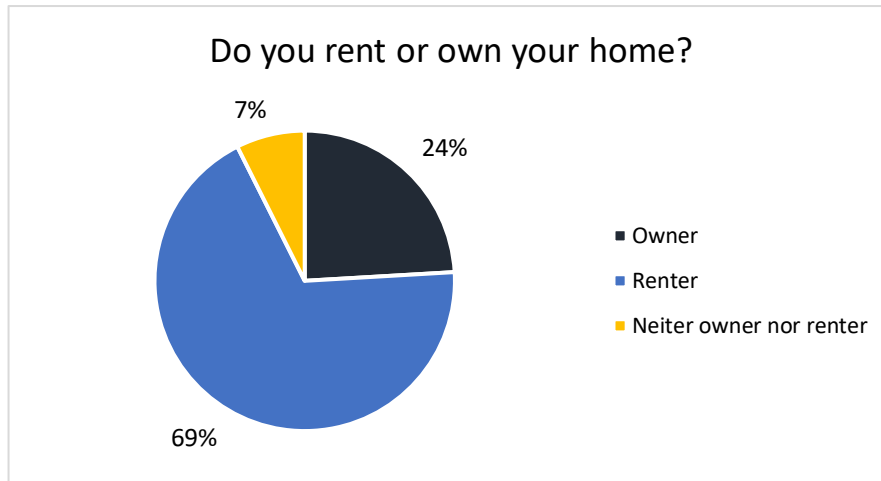
8. Indigenous people residing in Canada are those who self-identify as First Nations (status, non-status, treaty or non-treaty), Inuit, Métis, Aboriginal, Native or Indian. Does anyone participating in this survey identify as Indigenous to Canada? (Number of respondents: 220).



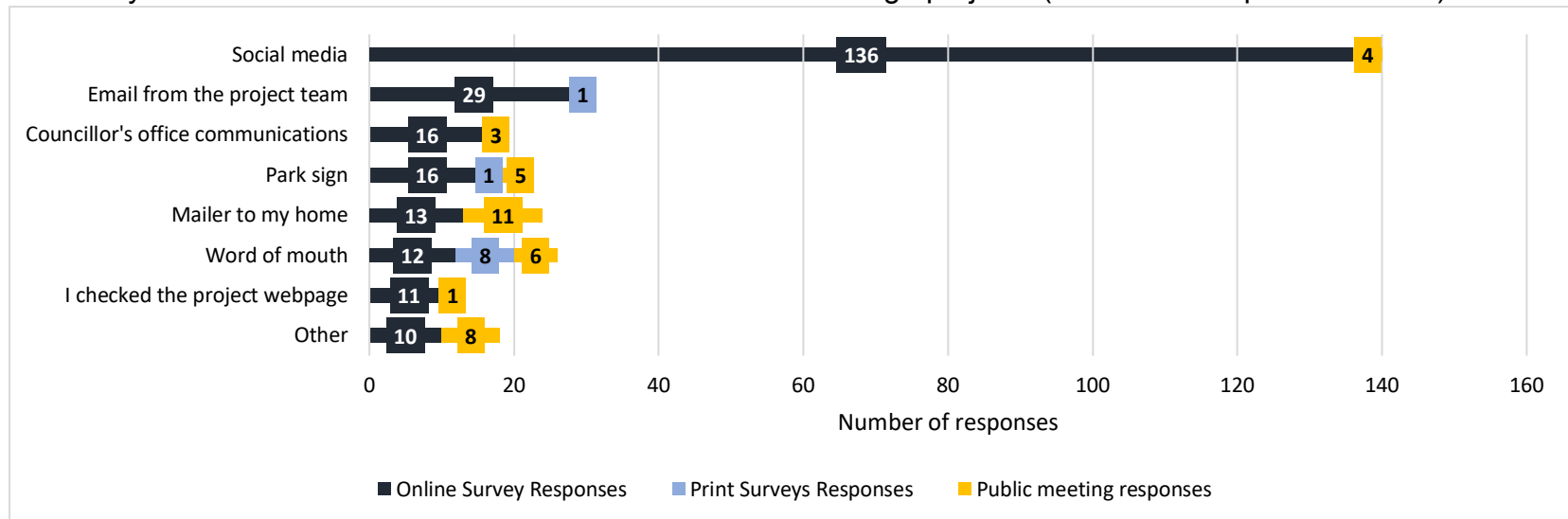
9. Disabilities, both visible and invisible, include physical, hearing, seeing, developmental, learning or mental health conditions, chronic illness and addictions. Disabilities may be from birth, caused by injury or accident, developed over time, or result from the combination of a person's condition and barriers in society. Does anyone participating in this survey identify as a person with a disability? (Number of respondents: 220).



10. Do you rent or own your home? (Number of respondents: 220).



11. How did you find out about the St. James Town West Park redesign project? (Number of respondents: 220).



Appendix B

Indigenous Community Sharing Meeting #2 Summary

Summary prepared by Bob Goulais, Nbisiing Consulting.

An Indigenous Community Sharing Meeting is a dedicated opportunity to listen to First Nation, Métis and Inuit voices and perspectives. This Sharing Meeting endeavours to be respectful, meaningful and collaborative forum using Indigenous protocols. If this meeting was done in-person, it would have been conducting in the Sharing Circle, in ceremony and led by the elders. However, due to public health measures, the Sharing Meeting was held virtually.

A second Sharing Meeting was held on April 22, to hear those ideas related to park design, park use and Indigenous placekeeping all from the unique perspective and worldview of Indigenous peoples.

Eleven people from First Nations rights-holders, Métis representatives and grass-roots community members took part in the Sharing Meeting. It is notable that several dedicated participants who participated in the first Indigenous Community Sharing Meeting returned to participate in this second Sharing Meeting. The gift of their knowledge and dedication to their community is commendable and worthy of thanks.

The key these shared during the Indigenous Community Sharing Meeting included:

1. Responsibility to the Land and Water
2. Indigenous Inclusion
3. Indigenous Design
4. History, Commemoration and Teaching Space
5. Other comments.

Key Themes from the Sharing Meeting

1. Responsibility to the Land and Water

- The meeting was held on **Shkaagamik-Kwe Giizhigad** (Earth Day) which brought focus to the participants from Elder Valarie King who spoke about the responsibility of Indigenous peoples to the Earth and Anishinaabe women to the water.

2. Indigenous Inclusion

- Based on specific feedback from the first Indigenous Community Sharing Meeting, **Nehiyaw/Méti artist Rebecca Baird** was brought onto the design team to interpret and advise on Indigenous design aspects for the park. Rebecca was introduced to the participants. However, her work had not yet been reflected in the concepts as she had been brought on board just prior to the session.

- Participants were **disheartened** and took exception that the ideas presented in the first Indigenous Community Sharing Meeting were not incorporated into either design presented.
- Participants urged the city to include an **Indigenous architect** and more Indigenous representation on the project team.
- **A participant challenged the City and the designers** to observe and consider how the park is used by Indigenous peoples including park users and people experiencing homelessness. Based on that, they will see the true flow of the park. There needs to be a ground ceremony to start.

3. Indigenous Design

- Indigenous cultural imagery, design elements and public art should be a **priority** in the park design.
- Participants were presented two design concepts. Most participants preferred the **Green Refuge** concepts presented by the design team, although some elements from the *Pathways* concept were also lauded.
- Participants want to see actual elements or representations of Indigenous perspectives on **sacred nibi (water)** incorporated into the park design such as wave patterns, riverbed elements in the pathways. Other ideas include wampum belt patterns and input from Inuit.
- **Re-naming of the Park** was suggested by participants, including naming it based on a story of the "Spirit Hawk" shared by a participant in the first Sharing Meeting. Other ideas include reflecting a name in Anishinaabemowin, the language of the Michi Saagiig people, and for the name of the park to reflect the journey of reconciliation and as a place for gathering.
- **Specific design ideas shared included:**
 - Having the 13 moons reflected perhaps in pillars.
 - Perhaps expanding or enhancing the existing mural.
 - A participant liked the canoe depiction shared by Rebecca Baird; traditional medicine planting on the south-facing area near the new building; that the traditional medicine planting be managed by an Indigenous agency.
 - Use of Indigenous trees and plants
 - Using sustainable and natural building materials
 - Donating felled trees to Indigenous agencies
 - Use of the Moccasin Identifier.
 - Representing a teaching lodge.

4. History, Commemoration and Teaching Space

- Commemoration of Treaty 13 and Indigenous history should be represented in the park. This could be an important inter-cultural teaching element. The pathways could be designed to be historical pathways. Education is the key.

5. Other comments

- The focus should not be on a formal skateboarding area.
- Concern over the overhead wire fixtures and that they may injure birdlife.
- Consider opportunities for Indigenous business in retail/café space in the building adjacent to the park.

Appendix C

Summaries of Youth Engagement

The following summaries were prepared by the City of Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation Public Consultation team.

St. James Town West Park Redesign

Youth Resource Group Meeting 2 – Concept Design Options

May 3, 2021 – 4:00 to 5:30pm

Overview

A virtual workshop was held on Zoom on Monday, May 3, 2021 from 4 to 5:30pm to gather feedback on the concept design options for the redesign of St. James Town West Park. Feedback was collected through a virtual workshop that used a Google Jamboard.

There were 12 participants including City of Toronto and DTAH staff present. The following is a summary of the discussion that took place.

Attendees

City of Toronto

Rajesh Sankat, Senior Public Consultation Coordinator, PFR

Laurel Christie, Senior Project Coordinator, PFR

DTAH

Elnaz Sanati, Landscape Architect

YRG Members

- 2 students from the University of Toronto Daniel's Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Design
- 1 ambassador from the St. James Town Community Ambassadors
- 4 members of the Wellesley Youth Council
- 2 students from Jarvis Collegiate Institute

Agenda

- Introductions and Welcome
- Context and Community Engagement so far
- Concept Designs
- Design Discussion and Activities
- Next steps and adjourn

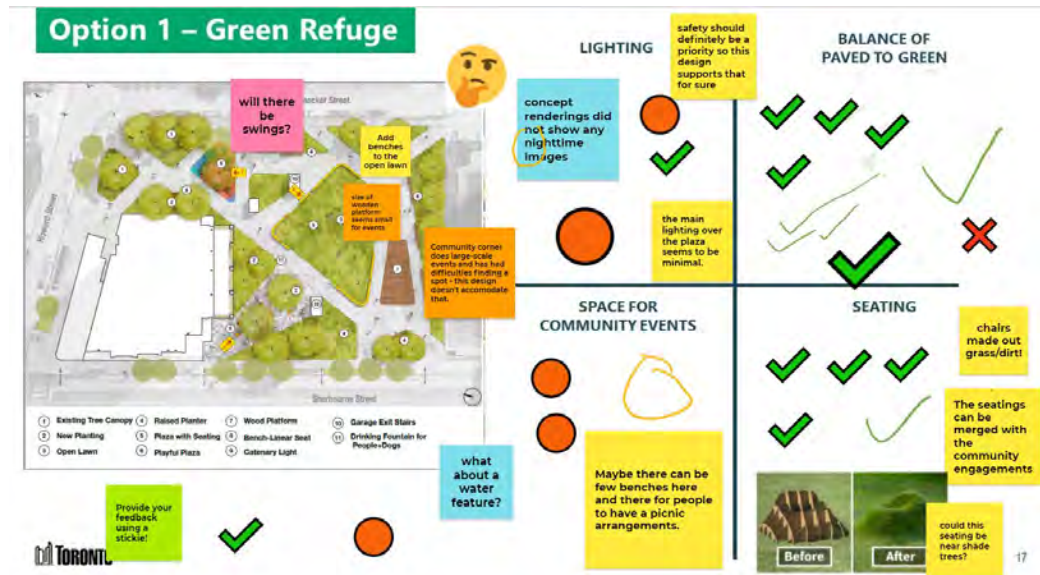
Feedback highlights

While there was a slight preference for Option 2, **comments and preferences on the concept design options were largely mixed**. YRG members identified elements of each Option that were liked/disliked, and areas of improvement.

General feedback

- Many YRG members commented that the perspective rendering of the parks were all in daytime, making it difficult to imagine how certain park features (plaza, playful plaza, and lighting) would look like at night.
- Both concepts were identified as having a sufficient balance of green to paved space.

Option 1 – Detailed Feedback

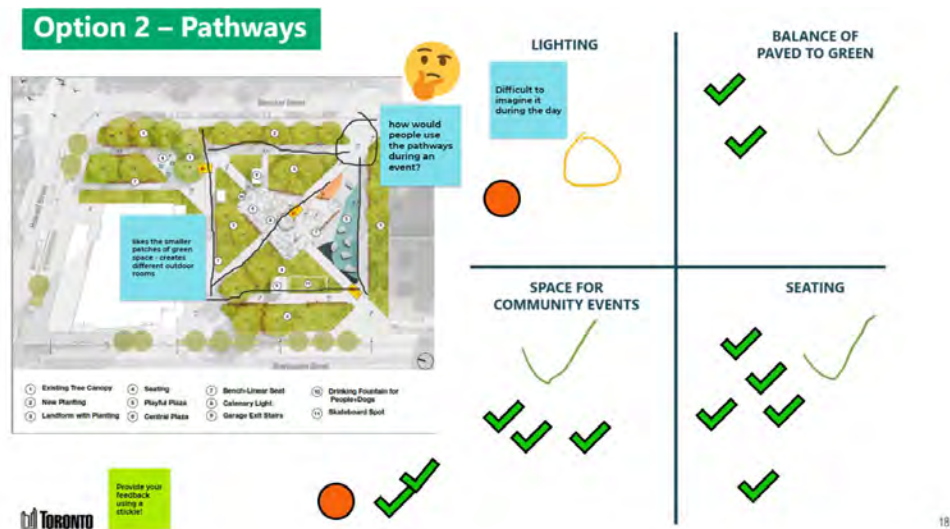


In general, YRG members liked the **balance and distribution of pavement to green spaces** and **seating options available** in Option 1.

Comments and suggestions for Option 1 included:

- **Lighting:** Some members identified the catenary lighting as too minimal for the park, and did not reflect past comments about making lighting a priority in the park to help create a welcoming and safe space for community members.
- **Wooden Platform:** The size of the wooden platform was identified as potentially too small for events.
- **Space for Community events:** Members indicated that local groups, like the Community Corner, already had difficulties finding spots for hosting events, and that Option 1 design did not accommodate this need.
- **Other:**
 - Adding swings or more play equipment to the Playful Plaza
 - Adding benches or a picnic table to the open lawn
 - Adding natural seating options to the lawn, like Natural Grass Chairs

Option 2 – Detailed Feedback



In general, YRG members liked the seating options, **balance and distribution of pavement to green spaces**, **space for community events**, and **seating** in Option 2.

Other comments and suggestions on Option 2 included:

- **Lighting:** Some members comments that the lighting design was difficult to imagine during the day, and was otherwise too minimal in size for the park.
- **Green Space and Outdoor Lawn:** Some members liked the patches of green spaces in Option 2, and envisioned them as “outdoor rooms”.
- **Pathway functionality:** Some members were unsure of how the pathways would function during a large community event, and what other pathways people might take to move around the park.
- **Skateboard park:**
 - Members indicated that the skateboard spot was too small.
 - Members commented that the skateboard spot was too close to the Playful Plaza and might result in conflict between parents and younger park users.
- **Additional open lawn space:** Some members suggested created an additional open lawn space at the parks north-east corner at Howard and Bleecker Street.

Next Steps

The Youth Resource Group will meet for one final meeting, to provide feedback on the Preferred Concept Design that incorporates feedback from community groups and key stakeholders.

St. James Town West Park Redesign

School Engagements – Concept Design Options

May 2021

Overview

2 virtual workshops were held using Google Meet/Zoom during May 2021 with local schools near St. James Town West Park, to collect feedback and ideas on the concept design options previously presented at the April 20, 2021 Virtual Public Meeting.

Students from the Jarvis Collegiate Institute and Rose Avenue Junior Public School attended a virtual design jam, which included a brief overview of the project, community engagement to date, and an interactive Google Jamboard workshop where they were allowed to share their thoughts and perspectives on the concept designs. Each session ranged between 30-45 minutes.

The following is a summary of the discussion that took place.

Workshop 1 – Jarvis Collegiate Institute

May 7, 2021



Attendees

City of Toronto

- Rajesh Sankat, Senior Public Consultation Coordinator, PFR
- Laurel Christie, Senior Project Coordinator, PFR
- Sally Antown, Research Assistant, PFR

Jarvis Collegiate Institute

- Approximately 20 students from a Grade 10 Civics Class

Key Feedback Highlights

- **Option 1 Feedback:**

- Features liked most by students included the Catenary Lighting, Wood Platform, and Gathering/Event Space.
- Features less liked by students included the seating options.
 - Some students suggested that a play structure be incorporated into the Playful Plaza element.
- **Option 2 Feedback:**
 - Features liked most by students included the Playful Plaza, Skateboarding Spot, and Seating Options.
 - Some students indicated they liked the Catenary Lighting and Central Plaza.

Skateboard and Basketball Courts

The project team asked students to share their thoughts on adding a basketball court to the park, instead of a skateboard court.

- **The majority of students said that they would prefer a basketball court.**
- Some students said that while they wouldn't use a basketball court, they'd still prefer one in comparison to a skateboard spot.
- Some students indicated that they would prefer a skateboard spot:
 - Basketball courts are available in many nearby schools, while skateboard spots aren't
 - There are many skateboard users in the neighbourhood, but not a lot of skateboard parks, which typically will result in conflicts between skateboard users and pedestrians. Providing more dedicated spaces for skateboard users would reduce this conflict.

General Comments and Questions

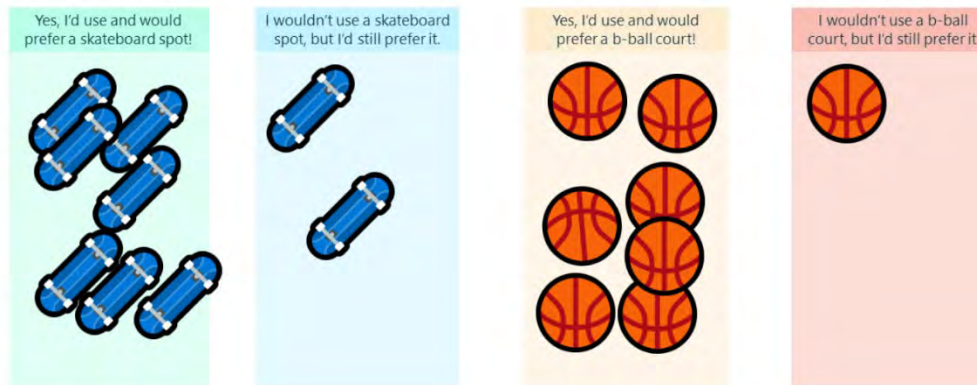
- Will sustainable materials be used in the park construction?
- Can a water feature be added?
- Will native species be planted?
- What type of lighting will be used (e.g. fluorescent lights?).

Workshop 2 – Rose Avenue Junior Public School May 19, 2021



Instead of a skateboard spot, the project team is considering adding a **basketball court** to the park.

Share your thoughts by dragging and dropping an icon!



City of Toronto

- Rajesh Sankat, Senior Public Consultation Coordinator, PFR
- Laurel Christie, Senior Project Coordinator, PFR

Rose Avenue Junior Public School

- Approximately 35-40 students from two Grade 6 classes

Key Feedback Highlights

- An overwhelming majority of participating students identified that public parks are their primary location for hanging out with friends and being outdoors.
- **The majority of students preferred Option 2 – Pathways.**
- **Option 1 Feedback:**
 - Features liked most by students included the Wood Platform, and Gathering Event Space.
 - Features less liked by students included the Playful Plaza and Catenary Lighting.
- **Option 2 Feedback:**
 - Features liked most by students included the Playful Plaza and Skateboarding Spot.
 - Some students indicated they liked the Catenary Lighting, Central Plaza, and Seating options.

Skateboard and Basketball Courts

The project team asked students to share their thoughts on adding a basketball court to the park, instead of a basketball court.

- **Generally, there was an even split between those who would prefer a basketball court, and would prefer a skateboard spot.**
 - Many students commented on the fact that a nearby basketball court had been removed, so a replacement would be welcome.
 - Students commented on the fact that they would use a skateboard spot if available at the park, as there were not many options near their neighbourhood.